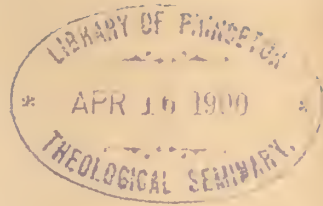
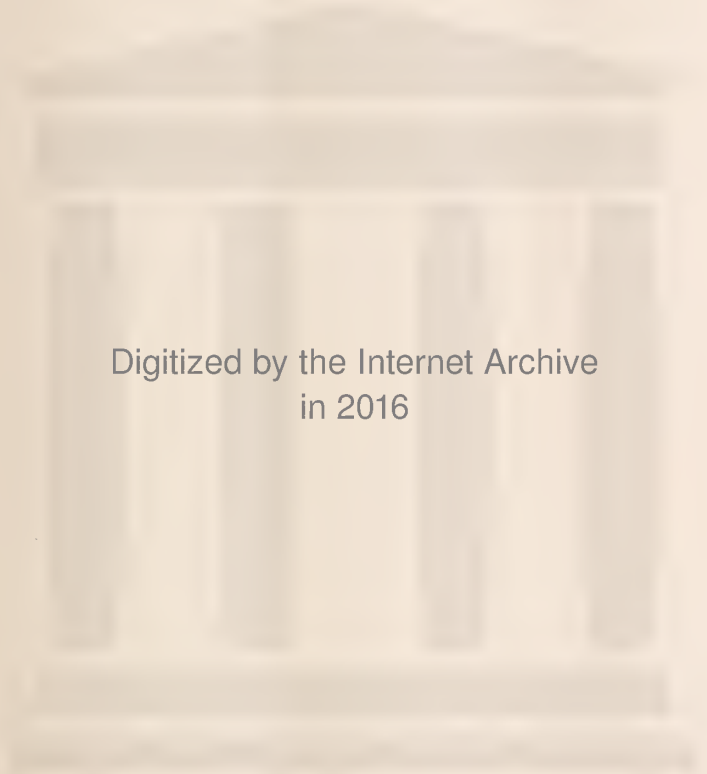


P. SCP 25402

A. A.



Miss Fannie E. Wight.
Rev. Calvin Wight.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016



A Brief Memorial

of my Missionary Children,

Rev. Calvin Wight

and his sister

Fannie E. Wight

Who both died of pneumonia at Chinan-fu, China,

Fannie, April 26, 1898, and

Calvin, July 13, 1899.

Also some thoughts suggested by their early departure from earth

Rev. J. K. Wight, New Hamburg, N. Y.

II Chron. 6:8. *"But the Lord said to David my father, forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thy heart."*

There was so much that was common to my two children Fannie and Calvin, that it is natural to link them together. They were engaged in the same work, lived part of the time in the same place, depended much upon one another, and were summoned to the better land by the same disease. Fannie was eleven years older than her brother and died first, a little over a year before Calvin.

She was born in Shanghai, China, where I was then stationed as a missionary of our Board of Foreign Missions. Bright and happy as a child, there was nothing that would have particularly attracted attention among other children except a curious combination of timidity and self-reliance. When still a girl in her teens a letter came to me from Mrs. Byers, an old missionary friend in China, who for forty years has been the honored Principal of Victoria College, Belfast, Ireland, asking me if any of my daughters thought of being teachers. If so she would be glad to give them a year or two's education. I read the letter to my daughters, and asked, who will go? Fannie replied, I will. She went alone remaining a year. After her return she engaged in teaching mostly in a private school for a few years. Her idea was to help her brothers in their education, thus beginning a work of self-forgetfulness and devotion to the interests of others, which characterized her whole after life. Later on the thought of going as a Foreign Missionary began to take definite form. A dear friend who had been her Bible Class teacher had already gone to Japan. This friend, Miss Julia Crosby, had been intimate in the home circle and the first inclination was to join her. It was ultimately decided to go under the Presbyterian Board to Northern China. Early in the Fall of 1885 she arrived at Chefoo and almost immediately

began work in a girl's school at that place. For this work many of her old friends thought her eminently qualified. For some of those Christian Chinese girls she formed a strong attachment, and some of them afterwards helped her in what became her special work. She afterwards moved to Wei Hien, and from that center was accustomed to go and visit and instruct the women connected with the various out-stations of the mission. On these journeys she was often absent three or four weeks at a time. She traveled by wheelbarrow, ox-cart or donkey. At first the filth, the jolting, the break-downs, the wretched accommodations in floorless houses, attempts at sleeping on tables, harassed a very sensitive organism, but the gratitude of women, the evident desire to learn, and the opportunities for good kept urging her on. Difficulties which her timid nature would have shrunk from, and which at home she would not have undertaken, were not thought of when in the path of duty. She crossed a river in an ox-cart, the water coming up into the body of the cart, when it was full of cakes of ice; and was hardly aware of her peril until she found the axletree of her cart broken after she was safely over. In her readiness to adapt herself to the people among whom she dwelt, she often ate Chinese food, though it did not agree with her, sang hymns for them and taught them to sing, though she had but an indifferent musical ear—was always bright and cheery and won her way to hearts hard and callous—cased as they so often were in filthy bodies. More than once she was asked, how do you get along so well with the Chinese. I treat them like other human beings, she replied. When she left on her furlough, over an hundred women united in a loving testimonial, wishing her a pleasant voyage and a speedy return to her work among them.

When on this return home her brother Calvin was pursuing his theological studies. They came near meeting in Japan before her return. Not quite as thoroughly prepared as he should have been he broke down early in his College course, and for seven years tried everything that he could think of for the restoration of health. Once I asked him, how long do you intend keeping up your purpose to enter the ministry? Until I am fifty, he replied. After various trials at home he under-

took a voyage to Japan, returning by way of Manila. When in Japan he could not get release from the ship long enough to see his sister. And the uncertainty of his movements prevented an attempt on her part to see him. After two or three shorter voyages before the mast, Calvin felt himself strong enough to resume work in college. He graduated from Princeton with his younger brother, and afterwards from the Theological Seminary. On June 5th, 1895, the two brothers, Calvin and Van Dyke, were ordained to the gospel ministry. The latter is preaching at present in Hastings, Neb., while Calvin went to China. He at first offered to go under our Board, but they were fearful of the old break-down and declined. The way was at once opened through Miss Rachel Kennedy, who offered to assume his support. With a sister already in the field, he naturally turned his steps in that direction. After he had obtained a working knowledge of the language, he selected Chinan-fu, the capital city of Shantung province, as his future home and field of labor. About this time he married a Miss Emerick, a young lady who had gone out from Canada a year before he did as a missionary of the China Inland Mission. He also arranged for the transfer of his sister Fannie to the Chinan Mission of our Board. Of the same mission he hired a house within the city walls. His idea was to keep in close touch with some mission of our Board, so that should he be taken away, the work begun could be easily transferred. Here in a city of 300,000, with a sister living with him and who according to his view was too little careful of her own life, the future seemed to give large and abundant opportunity for work. Their house was of the usual Chinese pattern, of one story surrounding an open court. Though low and hot, and surrounded by the usual filth which might breed disease, yet they could go to the hills, not more than twelve miles away, for the hottest part of the summer. Here he taught for two hours a day a small school in English, for boys of the official class; here he had preaching service, and afterwards added a depository of Bibles and other religious books in Chinese—often going on the streets and selling copies. He also employed an assistant in another part of the city. From this point also as a center, Fannie was to go and make her visits in the country.

It so happened that during the first winter there were large gatherings of the poor—both men and women—to receive an allowance from government. While the missionaries preached to the men, Fannie sought out and talked to the women. At length early in March of '98, and before the chilly winds and flurries of snow were over, she started into the country, on what proved to be her last missionary journey. She was absent five or six weeks, and came home with a severe cold, which was aggravated by encountering a severe dust storm at the end of her journey. As a specimen of the difficulties often met with, an old woman wanted her to stop with her over night, but the two front rooms of her cabin were occupied by two beggar families. A little back room with no light but through a displaced brick, was placed at her disposal, and there she tried to rest, but without sleep, curled up on a table to keep away from the damp floor. When she reached home so weak and exhausted, the physician asked why she had kept on and not returned sooner. The reply was that the opportunities were such that she could not miss them. Her recuperative power had always been great and the hope was indulged that she would soon be well again. But after ten days waiting, part of the time spent in a comatose state, she passed away. The brother took the body to Chefoo and buried it in the cemetery overlooking the sea. It was a sad loss for all of us—sad so it seemed to us for the cause, and especially for the poor women of Shantung province who had so learned to love her visits, but to none came the blow more heavily than to Calvin. He had watched with admiration the consecrated, unselfish, self-denying, unheralded work. She was giving her life for the cause, and with a brother's strong arm and considerate care he sought to shield her from a fatal termination, but he bowed calmly to the divine will. Heaven was the better place. Work also demanded attention. A few months were spent at a temple among the hills, going back on the Sabbath to the city for services there. In the fall came a freshet on the Yellow River, involving in suffering and destitution over a million people. Calvin went with others to help. He also wrote articles appealing to the kindly disposed in England and America. Preaching became more of a pleasure as the language became more familiar.



Bibles or parts of scripture were sold on the streets, sometimes as many as fifty copies a day. Thus the winter with its duties and plans for more work passed rapidly away. A new joy also came to the home in the birth of a little Fannie, whom the parents delighted to name after the sister who had so recently passed away. Again early in June as the heat began to tell on wife and child, the temple in the hills was sought for as the year before. Exposure, for the temple leaked in heavy rains, brought on a severe cold which turned to pneumonia, and after four days he died, of the same disease as his sister, on July 13th. One however lay in a state of lethargy, hard to arouse—the other was keenly sensitive to all that was going on. When the end came, the wife and child took the same melancholy journey to Chefoo, requiring some ten or twelve days, and there they buried him by the side of the sister in the cemetery overlooking the sea.

Calvin had made his home for part of the time at Chefoo and so was well known to the missionaries and foreign residents there. The funeral services were conducted by Dr. Hunter Corbett, an old friend of mine, and by Rev. Paul D. Bergen, a special friend of Calvin's. I give a brief sketch of the address of the latter, as showing how he was regarded by others. Mr. Bergen spoke first of his manly beauty and vigor, or as Dr. Corbett put it, he had the appearance of being one of the most healthy of men—one whom all hoped had a long and useful career in China awaiting him. Mr. Bergen also spoke of the first sermon which he heard from him, which showed him to be a man of original power and deep thought, and then of the trip they had taken together into the interior, where he learned to *love* him. One of the characteristics which he spoke of was his *resolution*—his fixed purpose and indomitable will, that battled against every thing that lay in the line of duty. 2. Was his *gentleness* shown in his sympathy for others, and in meeting with calm equanimity all annoyances and trials when traveling. 3. His *reserve*. He had but little of the *gush* about his nature, but there were depths of feeling revealed to those near to him. Such knew of his deep love for his work and for the Master.

I might add my own estimate of the qualifications of these

two for the service of the Master, but I forbear. It is sufficient that in the opinion of others qualified to judge, they were well fitted to carry forward the work they had so earnestly begun. When one still in her prime, and the other after less than four years, mostly of preparation, are cut down in a field so greatly in need of laborers, what are we to say? Has there been any mistake in all the expense and pains of years of preparation? Should it discourage parents or the Church, because when at the threshold of usefulness, the laborer is cut down before the great harvest is reaped? Is there any light, as the sod is placed over the graves of the departed? Must we bow our heads and weep over disappointed hopes, and perhaps vainly try to repress a murmur, or shall we rejoice? There are two ways in which the true Christian spirit may act. One is the quiet, submissive faith which simply accepts without a murmur or a doubt God's way, and says in those words of Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Another way is while completely submissive to take in all the light and comfort which God gives, either by his word or providence, and find reasons for praise as well as silence before the Lord. Doubtless some afflictions call more for one style of submission and others for more of the other. Whatever reasons God has given for comfort and praise, certainly we should look at them, lest we be unduly cast down. There is a silver lining to many a dark cloud, which we are to look at, just as much as at the vivid lightning and the intense blackness. Let me mention some truths which have come to me in the hours of quiet reflection, as reasons why I should not be unduly cast down when the fondest hope of my life, after being disappointed about my own chosen work, was that my children should perpetuate the work I sought to accomplish. Possibly there may have been in such a hope too much of self seeking. If so it needs repentance before God. But aside from that, there are these thoughts: 1st. Human schemes and plans often demand the same sacrifice. The wage-earner, the father or mother of the family, the soldier, may be stricken down when seemingly most needed. No battle is expected to be won without sacrifice of life. The bravest may fall first. Our country trains its officers through years of study, of drill and ser-

vice in the field. Some will fall in every campaign—some will die in hospitals, yet the cause and the country must be sustained. We glory in our loyalty to our government. A young lad served in a Japanese regiment as a musician. In the war with China he was to sound the bugle-call to charge. A stray shot struck him at the very beginning of the battle, he fell to the ground with the blood trickling from his wound. While lying there he thought of his duty to sound the call to charge. He was raising himself with difficulty, when a comrade bid him lie still as his life blood was oozing away. But his duty was to sound the charge, and with a heroic effort he steadied himself on his elbow, sounded the call and sank back dead. His admiring comrades bore him to his home and sought to console the parents. But they said, we are glad that through our son we could show our loyalty to our country, and we need not your sympathy. [I am indebted to Rev. George Knox, D. D., formerly of Japan, for the above incident.] If the country's cause needs loyalty and calls for the life of our sons, shall we deny the same faithfulness and sacrifice in a better cause?

2. Another thought. It is well to set before ourselves high ideals even if we may not live to carry them out. It was well for David to think and provide for the building an house for Jehovah, even though he had to leave the building of it to his son Solomon. A heart that beat in love and gratitude to God was not satisfied to dwell in an house of cedar, while the ark of God dwelt within curtains. The aspiration of the soul is a benediction to itself. It gets nearer to God, feels the throb-beat of his mighty plans and purposes, and is made more like the divine being under whose shadow he dwells. The temple which we are to build now, is to fill the earth with his praise and show forth his salvation to all peoples. It is better to die in undertaking it, than to live for any ordinary worldly scheme, and then if our efforts meet with the divine approval the work will not fail. The loyalty which one shows will be a stimulus to others. The standard will be taken up by son or daughter, or by those whom we may not have known in the flesh, and carried triumphantly forward. The thought of David was realized in the action of Solomon. And the same thought and desire of honoring God has been working like leaven in the minds of others ever since.

3. Once more. Activity and usefulness here prepares for work as well as rest in the world to come. We sometimes get the idea that the rest of heaven will be inactivity. But God has constituted us with natures that would tire of that, and the rest of Canaan was not idleness, but while a grand inheritance, was still a work of conquest. How much the saints in heaven share in the bringing of this world to Christ we can hardly tell, but it may be comforting to look at some facts which point in that direction. First then, we often speak of death as sleep—a state of insensibility. This is doubtless true of the body which sleeps in the grave until the morning of the resurrection. But with reference to the Spirit, the evidence is altogether the other way. Christ says that God is not the God of the dead but of the living, and so the argument was that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were alive and in all the activity of life. Moses and Elijah appeared in the transfiguration scene, not as ghosts from the dead, but as living inhabitants of the other world. In the parable of Dives, Abraham appears as the spokesman of God's will. Still stronger is the fact of our connection with Christ our head. Death could not hold possession of him, not even over his body, longer than three days. For wise purposes and to prepare a home for our bodies, we sleep till the resurrection, but our spiritual life, connected with Christ's spiritual life, must live because he lives. As death could not hold as prisoner Christ's life, so it cannot those connected with him, and so the legitimate inference of the Apostle is that when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord. There should be no hesitation therefore in accepting the statement that the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory.

As to their employment there in this state of interval before the resurrection, we may not perhaps speak with the same confidence. In most respects we shall be as the angels who are in heaven—free as they are from the merely physical, but more interested than it is possible for them to be in the scenes of this earthly existence. They have never sinned and we have been redeemed from sin, and yet into the mysteries and unfoldings of man's salvation they have desired to look. They have been, and doubtless are, constantly sent on missions of love and sympathy. They sang the song of Hallelujah at the

birth of the infant Saviour, and no doubt heaven resounded with a triumphant song as he ascended victor over death and the grave to sit at the right hand of the Father. If angels are thus interested, much more will the saints be in the triumph of their King. And then we know that Christ takes special interest and concern in the affairs of earth. He has promised to be with his people alway. He is with them in affliction, as when he revealed himself to Saul as Jesus whom thou persecutest. He is no less the Captain of God's host than when he appeared to Joshua.

The warriors all over earth's battlefield are strengthened and encouraged by his presence. As he, the head, thus concerns himself with earth's affairs, so may we not suppose that the redeemed, the members of his body, share in this concern? While we cannot but think of those with God as supremely happy, we are also inclined to consider as literally true, that the souls of those that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held, which John saw under the altar, should cry with a loud voice saying: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"—Rev. 6: 9-10. A brighter prospect is revealed in millennial days of reigning with Christ. The reign of Christ, as we are clearly taught in the New Testament, is not reigning in a world capital, with standing army and powerful navy, but ideas conquering—right, truth, and love becoming the governing principles of men's consciences and lives. In helping this consummation forward, the saints are to sit on thrones, as Christ sits on his throne.

Of the fact and effect of this heavenly influence we can often be as certain as we can of human actions. Some of the planning in this regard we shall have to put way back in geologic ages while the world itself was in process of formation. Take for example the distribution of the precious metals, by which at the right time and place for the world's evangelization, the population has been drawn to California, Australia and South Africa. This thought in the ages back was before the redeemed from earth could have shared in it. But take the inventions of to-day, by which distance is almost annihilated and the facilities for world travel made vastly superior to those in the

days of our fathers. Why did men not find out these things centuries ago? Are we so superior in intellect to those of former generations? or was the church and the world not ready for the work of evangelization as now? And when ready, and men not even knowing God's purpose, he has put it into their hearts to facilitate the extension of his cause. Then take the strange extension of the influence and power of Christian nations over vast areas of the world's territory. I say Christian nations for though others have had the desire—for a reason which will have to go back to the counsels of Eternity, they have not been successful. As evidence of this, see the marvellous growth in the use of the English language in the last century. There was no intention on the part of England fifty years ago, to take possession of India. They have been led along beyond the thought of government or people. We interfered in Cuba without a thought of the Philippines on the other side of the globe. We may talk about manifest destiny and imperialism. It would be better to see and read the lesson, that the way of the Lord is being prepared among all nations. Government and bullets do not convert. But obstacles can be removed. A highway can be cast up for the redeemed of the Lord to pass over. In this and in other ways, to which we cannot even refer, angelic hosts and the hosts of the redeemed, may be used by the King of Kings in furthering his purpose. Doubtless one reason why this cause is called the kingdom of heaven, is because heaven has so much to do with it. It is a stone without hands—without human help, filling the earth. It is the river of salvation starting as a small stream, but increasing rapidly, by the divine, rather than the human additions to its flow.

In this grand work we believe our loved ones from earth have a share. If they have been co-workers with God here below, why not also in the kingdom above? We say their work on earth is ended. True so far as earthly methods are concerned. But will their interest in the kingdom of heaven wane through change of residence? Will they be less efficient when freed from earthly trammels? Are they not servants of God there as well as here? Is the sword which they have wielded for the truth to rust in its scabbard until the Resurrec-

tion, or with scabbard thrown away is it to be made brigher and more effectual in the army that follows the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

We have gone as far as it is proper. We might run into various conjectures as to details, but where Revelation is silent, we had better be. Enough is revealed to show that the joys of heaven are not merely after the Resurrection, and that they are not restricted to golden streets and rest from sin, but there is the bliss of enlarged faculties, great opportunities, and of all that is included in the joy of the Lord—the joy in which we are to share and which he exercises on his throne.

We have a right as our Lord himself to be stimulated by the joy set before us, and we should get all the stimulus we can from the great cloud of witnesses who are co-operating in sympathy and effort to realize the same end for which we are laboring. It is not as in Egypt where Napoleon saw twenty centuries in their sarcophagi and mummied tombs looking down upon us, but forty centuries of the gathered living hosts of God's elect cheering us on to victory. Living and in health we should be lifted and stimulated by the glory of this vision. As one stands in some deep cañon and looks up at the power of God in the upheaval of mighty masses of rock, and thinks of his kindly thought towards man in the ages that are past—so it is our privilege to wonder and adore where his love has made fissures in the sky, through which we catch glimpses of joys unspeakable, and of glory which will abundantly satisfy the sanctified longings of every human soul. Sometimes that opening in the sky widens as the soul approaches nearer the gates. In his brief illness, with unclouded intellect, my son facing what we would call the dread reality, but which to him was glorious, could not only say with the utmost resignation, "It is all right, thy will be done," but as the chariot was ascending could say, "If this will bring us nearer to God, we must thank him," and again "It ought to be counted all joy to enter heaven, my only sorrow is for the loved ones left behind. I would not exchange the pleasures I have for all this wide world." If such was the prospect on the death bed, how ineffable the glory into which he so soon entered.

Shall we then think of the light as it went around from

hamlet to hamlet in Shantung province as extinguished, and the song of Jesus and his love as hushed? Shall we look at the hand, as it held out help for the famishing, as cold in death, or the voice that was getting through difficulties and was finding pleasure in telling the story of the cross, as silent? Shall we look with sadness and tears to the cemetery overlooking the sea where their bodies lie? Or shall we think of them as glorified and active spirits serving the Lord, more unweariedly and joyously than ever before? Perhaps their spirits hover with special interest over the regions where they were permitted to dwell when in the body—sent it may be on some mission of love and sympathy, possibly to be an eye-opener to some dark minded heathen, or an urgent call to some soldier in Christ's army to follow the same example. Unseen is our Lord and the host of the redeemed, but with muffled wings and no sound of drum-beat, their work makes ours more effectual and the victory nearer than we imagine. It is one army of the living God—part have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now. Do our loved ones die and their work perish? Nay, verily, they live and their works follow them.

